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Chicken Tarragon

Still skeptical about whether such simple recipes with so few ingredients can really bring inspired results to the table? Please – try this recipe. It's proof that fresh, vivid, beautiful cooking can truly be *très, très simple* indeed. The key here is that supremely French herb, tarragon – in this case, there is no substitute, and it must be fresh.

Makes 4 Servings

4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about 1-1/4 pounds total)
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 large shallot, finely chopped (about 1/4 cup)
2 medium-sized tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped (1 cup)
3/4 cup dry white wine
1 tablespoon tarragon vinegar or white wine vinegar
2 tablespoons snipped fresh tarragon

1. Place the chicken breasts, one at a time, between two sheets of plastic wrap and pound to 1/4-inch thickness. (Alternatively, you can halve each breast horizontally, or butterfly them.) Season both sides with salt and pepper.

2. In a large skillet, melt 1 tablespoon of the butter over medium-high heat. Add the chicken (in batches, if necessary) and cook, turning once, until no longer pink inside, 6 to 8 minutes (reduce the heat to medium if the meat browns too quickly). Transfer the chicken to a platter and cover with foil to keep warm.

3. Add the shallot and tomatoes to the skillet and sauté briefly, until the shallot is translucent. Add the wine, stirring with a whisk to loosen any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Bring to a boil and boil until the wine is reduced by about half – this should take 2 to 3 minutes, depending on the heat and your pan size.

4. Add the vinegar and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Whisk in the remaining 2 tablespoons butter, 1 tablespoon at a time, until the butter is melted and the sauce is thickened. Season the sauce with additional salt and pepper, if needed. Stir in the tarragon. Arrange the chicken on four dinner plates, spoon the sauce over the chicken, and serve.